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U.S. Role in Subversion

It is heartening that a significant segment of the American people has at least been vociferous in its curiosity about the role played by this government, and the CIA in particular, in the overthrow of the democratically elected Allende government in Chile. The CIA's no less blatant action in Guatemala 20 years ago passed with very few raised eyebrows here.

It was stupefying to be confronted with a television news film of the CIA's current director recently remarking, in that matter-of-fact way, that what his agency had done in Chile was nothing at all exceptional, but simply what has to be done when action is indicated somewhere between registering a diplomatic protest and sending in the Marines."

Even as the mind boggled, the same broadcast carried a repetition of Secretary Kissinger's reassuring statement that of course we have a right to subvert another sovereign nation "to protect its people from their own irresponsibility." (This, at least, struck home, making the listener wish we had been so protected from our own irresponsibility as manifested in 1968 and again in 1972.) The image of our country and its intentions presented by these two statements is not only unattractive but downright frightening; one hopes for legislators and statesmen with the courage to repudiate them effectively.

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